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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the endorsement of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 1/ by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/108 of 13 December 1985, the Secretary-General has presented a report each year to the Assembly on the implementation of the Strategies. In its resolution 49/161 of 23 December 1994, the General Assembly reaffirmed the importance of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women for the period up to the year 2000 and provided comprehensive guidance to Governments, the organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations on their implementation. It requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fiftieth session on measures taken to implement the resolution.

2. In addition, by its resolution 49/162 of 23 December 1994 on the integration of older women in development, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its fiftieth session on the implementation of that resolution. The requested material has been included in the present report.

3. The present report has been prepared on the basis of contributions from and in consultation with the organizations of the United Nations system. Information regarding the Fourth World Conference on Women and its follow-up is found in separate reports.

II. PRIORITY THEMES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AT ITS FORTIETH SESSION

4. The General Assembly, in paragraph 20 of resolution 49/161, requested the Secretary-General to include in his report an assessment of recent developments that were relevant to the priority themes to be considered at the subsequent session of the Commission on the Status of Women and to transmit to the Commission a summary of relevant views expressed by delegations during the debate in the Assembly.

A. Equality: Elimination of stereotyping of women in the mass media

5. The issue of women and the media, including women as audience and consumers, the employment of women in the media and the stereotyped content delivered by print, electronic media and advertisements, have received increasing attention. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies emphasized the critical role of the media in advancing the status of women and the role of women in development and called for the elimination of exploitative and stereotyped portrayal of women in various forms of the media, including in advertisements.

6. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies contain references concerning the need for women to be an integral part of decision-making with respect to the

choice and development of alternative forms of communications and the need for them to have an equal say in the determination of the content of all public information efforts. The Strategies also refer to the need to assist organizations aimed at promoting the role of women in development in their efforts to establish effective communications and information networks.

7. The first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 stated that practices denigrating the role and potential of women continued to constitute obstacles in many countries, in particular the stereotyped images of male and female roles in textbooks or the glorification of traditional roles in the mass media. The perpetuation of such images retarded women's advancement by providing justification for an unequal status quo. Recommendation III of the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15, states that Governments should, in conjunction with women's groups, take steps to reduce the stereotyping of women in the mass media, whether by self-policing on the part of the media or by other measures. The United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other appropriate organizations of the United Nations system should continue to analyse the extent and effects of stereotyping of women and should implement innovative programmes to combat it. Another reference is made to the role of the media in the context of violence against women. Recommendation XXII states that the United Nations system, Governments and non-governmental organizations should study the relationship between the portrayal of violence against women in the media and violence against women in the family and society, including possible effects of new transnational transmission technologies.

8. The second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, in 1995, stated that the nexus of women, media and development was finally being recognized as a central element of local, national and international agendas of research, policy-making, funding and other action.

9. In the matter of media content and gender portrayal, there has been progress in raising awareness on the issue and removing bias, but in general, the media continue to reflect and reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. Women are still portrayed in traditional roles with an emphasis on their presumed passive and dependent character. Social and occupational roles are divided along gender lines. Women tend to be depicted within the home and are rarely portrayed as rational, active or decisive. Although media images may challenge traditional perceptions of the role of women in society, they more often serve to reinforce them.

10. Women are frequently shown as victims or in helpless conditions. Differences in the portrayal of men and women indicate that social roles and behaviour are scrutinized according to stereotyped expectations and interpretations. The media coverage shapes how political leaders are evaluated, with women framed in ways that perpetuate their lack of participation in decision-making. Media agenda-setting influences which issues are given priority, with policies for women given a lower level of concern.

11. Many women's groups and consumer associations have begun media monitoring. Media watch groups try to note instances of stereotyped representation of women and to make media producers aware by providing media-literacy training and eventually to empower the audience. Audience studies and reception analyses are available throughout developed countries, however, there is little data on women as an audience in developing countries. Figures on access to media use in developing countries show disparities that are linked to the availability of the various forms of the media and to the level of education and the persistence of illiteracy.

12. Employment patterns in the media have changed, with a global trend towards increased professional activities of women in all forms of the media. Over the past 15 years, the number of women educated and trained in communications and journalism has increased. In many countries, women account for 50 per cent of the students in journalism and communication studies. However, the proportion of women professors in journalism and communication studies is limited in most countries and the curricula do not prepare students on gender-related issues in their profession.

13. Furthermore, the proportion of women employed in the mass media does not correspond to the number of female graduates. The majority of women occupy administrative jobs in media organizations, while only a minority become producers and creative staff. The number of women in decision-making positions able to shape media policy and content is very low. Women's access to influential positions in the media is hampered by barriers such as attitudes, working conditions and work assignments.

14. Through research and training, national and international efforts have been made to understand the situation of women world wide and to empower women to influence private attitudes, public opinion and policies. These efforts, however, have made limited use of the media and new communication technologies to promote and disseminate research, to stipulate greater interaction among people and to provide training and sources of education for the advancement of women.

15. Women's alternative media, including media associations and networks, have increased world wide and have developed a niche that can have an impact on the mainstream media. The most established of the alternative media are print media, which have a wide circulation in developed countries. Electronic media are increasingly available and used by women, particularly radio, which is the cheapest and most widespread form of electronic media in developing countries. The INTERNET and e-mail have gained importance and have been widely used by women activists for global networking.

16. As communication technologies and the media acquire a global reach, their power to influence public opinion and the course of development increases. Those with access to and control of the media and communications, therefore, are in a position to influence the course of development, equality and peace. There is a need to examine the ways in which women are using communication technologies, the impact they have on women, the constraints to women's access to innovative communications technologies and how women can enter the mainstream of these developments. Women's access to communications and the media needs to

be enhanced if women are to participate effectively in decision-making on all aspects of development.

17. The mass and alternative media, as well as new communication technologies (such as CD-ROM, e-mail, satellite, remote-sensing), are important vehicles through which information can be exchanged expeditiously and training and education extended to women. The globalization, privatization and commercialization of the mass media have reached new dimensions. Transnational broadcast networks have increased as has the privatization of national media networks. With privatization, the question of control of media content and guidelines for media ethics becomes even more difficult to handle.

18. In preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women, UNESCO organized an international symposium on women and the media: access to expression and decision-making, which took place at Toronto, Canada, from 28 February to 3 March 1995. The symposium adopted the Toronto Platform for Action, which sets out specific recommendations for achieving women's equality in the media and addresses them to Governments, media enterprises, professional media organizations, non-governmental organizations, educational and media training institutions and others.

19. In order to explore the subject of women and the media further, as mandated by the Commission on the Status of Women, an expert group meeting on the portrayal of women and men in the media will be convened at the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, from 16 to 20 October 1995. Taking place immediately after the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing in September 1995, the meeting will draw on the action proposed in the Platform for Action under critical area "J".

20. The meeting will undertake a comparative analysis of content, portrayal and coverage of women and men in the mass media so as to discern progress and possible backlash. It will evaluate developments in the past 20 years, including the increase of commercialization, sexually explicit material and pornography. Emphasis will be put on globalization of the mass media and the impact of transboundary transmission in the portrayal of women and men. Questions related to media monitoring such as self-regulation and guidelines versus formal directives and legislative constraints will be examined.

B. Development: Child and dependant care, including sharing of work and family responsibilities

21. The priority theme was suggested in the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000, contained in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15, and will be taken up by the Commission on the Status of Women during its fortieth session, in March 1996.

22. Since 1975, several international instruments have reflected a consistent emphasis on the need for reducing the double burden on women of work and family

responsibilities. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in its articles 5, 10 (c) and 11, sets out specific legal requirements for States parties to encourage the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women and the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex.

23. In 1981, the International Labour Organization adopted the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Recommendation (No. 165). The instruments have the dual objective of creating equality of opportunity and treatment in working life between men and women who have family responsibilities and between these workers and other workers. They call upon member States to make it an aim of national policy to enable persons with family responsibilities, who are engaged or wish to engage in employment, to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination and, to the extent possible, without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities.

24. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies emphasized that neither the actual expansion of employment for women nor the recognition that women constitute a significant proportion of producers has been accompanied by social adjustments to ease women's burden of earning a living and taking care of children and domestic chores. Despite significant efforts in many countries to transfer tasks traditionally performed by women to men or to public services, traditional attitudes continue to persist and, in fact, have contributed to the increased burden of work placed on women. The Strategies highlighted the complexity and multidimensional aspects of changing sex roles and norms and the difficulty of determining the specific structural and organizational requirements of such a change.

25. Women's economic independence and access to gainful activities is a precondition for self-reliance in a viable and sustained way. For this reason and in order to reduce the burden on women of work and family responsibilities, it was necessary to recognize and measure women's unremunerated work, including reproductive activities. Reproductive activities are understood in a broad sense to be those carried out to reproduce and care for the household and community, including fuel and water collection, food preparation, child care, education, health care and home maintenance. These activities, which are often viewed as non-economic, generally carry no monetary compensation and are excluded from national income accounts. The promotion of changes in social attitudes with respect to the role of women in society requires the establishment of a system of sharing parental responsibilities by women and men and by society, as well as the provision of a social infrastructure in both urban and rural areas.

26. To achieve the sharing of parental responsibilities between men and women and society, the following measures need to be taken: (a) introduction of flexible working hours for men and women; (b) development and strengthening of maternity protection schemes; (c) introduction of parental leave; and (d) accessible child-care facilities for working parents.

27. In paragraph 19 of the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, set out in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution

1990/15, it is noted that urbanization, migration and economic changes have increased the proportion of families headed by women and the number of women entering the labour force. These women have experienced increasing difficulties in harmonizing their economic role with the demands on them to provide care for children and dependants. The double burden, rather than being reduced by greater sharing between spouses, has increased. Unless it is reduced, women will not be able to play their full and fair role in development.

28. In the same resolution, in recommendation XVII, it is noted that support measures should be established with a view to facilitating the combination of parental and other caring responsibilities and paid employment, including policies for the provision of services and measures to increase the sharing of such responsibilities by men and women and to deal with specific problems of female-headed households that include dependants.

29. In the same recommendation, the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other appropriate organizations of the United Nations system were requested to make special efforts to analyse the issues of caring for children and dependants and sharing domestic, parental and other caring responsibilities, including the appraisal of national experience.

30. The second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies concluded that the feminization of employment has been one of the most important economic changes of the past decade in terms of both the rapid influx of women into the paid labour force and the emerging patterns of employment. Estimates show that more than one third of all women aged 15 years and older are in the formal labour market. Female economic activity has increased over the past two decades in almost all regions and, if activities in the informal sector were counted, the increase would be even greater. About one half of all economically active women in developing countries are employed in the informal sector.

31. During the past decade, female participation in the labour market has grown at an average of 10 per cent in all regions of the world, i.e., twice the rate of their male counterparts, and women's representation in the economically active population doubled between 1970 and 1990. In most parts of the world, women are no longer a "reserve" labour force; they are more and more becoming the workers who remain economically active throughout their working lives. The trend towards rising female labour force participation is a stable one, occurring at the same time as economic activity rates for men have been falling.

32. One quarter of all households world wide are headed by women, and households are dependent on female income, even where men are present. Evidence has been found that the strong correlation between female headship and poverty is also a result of higher dependency ratios.

33. However, despite these trends, structural adjustment programmes in many countries have forced cuts in basic services and in investments in human development, shifting the responsibilities of basic social services from Governments to women without compensation. And, while there has been increased understanding that social protection needs to be accorded to workers and female heads of households, particularly in terms of services such as child care that

enable women to reconcile their productive and reproductive roles, global restructuring has reduced the likelihood that such facilities are provided either by the State or by private enterprises. As a result, there is concern about how children and dependants are cared for and what alternative ways of sharing family responsibilities could be provided in this new context.

34. The double burden on women of work and family responsibilities and the extent to which the sharing of these responsibilities between women and men has changed or is expected to change are issues that merit further research. Quantitative measurements of the sharing of women and men of family responsibilities need to be developed to help establish more practical and quantifiable policy targets. One approach currently used is through time-use studies that provide indicators of the time devoted by women and men to family activities and to work. Other approaches should also be explored.

35. In order to develop the subject further, an expert group meeting will be held from 4 to 8 December 1995 in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Korea, at Seoul. The main objective of the meeting is to define policies for child and dependant care that could involve men as central actors, mainly in developing countries. It is proposed that the following matters be discussed at the meeting:

(a) The existing modalities for child and dependant care for working parents and women heads of households, in the formal and informal sectors;

(b) The impact that the feminization of the labour market has or could have on the actual division of labour between men and women, including child and dependant care;

(c) The progress and potential backlash of alternative policies, programmes and projects involving men in the sharing of work and family responsibilities.

36. The meeting will study a number of topics and formulate policy recommendations to be forwarded to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fortieth session, in 1996. Experts will be invited to prepare inputs on a specific issue and to reply to questions. Scheduled to take place immediately after the Fourth World Conference on Women, the meeting will draw on the conclusions of the Conference. A central theme in the Platform for Action adopted by the Conference is expected to be the sharing of responsibilities.

C. Peace: Education for peace

37. The role of women in education for peace is one of the main themes of research, action and training in the area of "women and peace". This issue has been addressed on a number of occasions, including at the Expert Group Meeting on Women and Peace, held at Vienna in 1983, and in the report on access to information and education for peace (E/CN.6/1988/5), submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-second session, in 1988.

38. In both the first (1990) and second (1995) reviews and appraisals of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, many countries reported on the role of women in education for peace, although the issue was given less attention in 1995 than in 1990. In the second review and appraisal, such issues as war-related violence and its impact on women; the role of women in peace-keeping and the peacemaking process; women in the military and police force; and the participation of women in decision-making in the areas of peace and security gained a more prominent place on the agenda.

39. With the end of the cold war, however, and with attempts to establish democracy and a new world order, there has been a growing understanding that these goals cannot be achieved without the full participation of women. Thus, in this context, there is a need to revisit the concept of education for peace and the role that women can play in this respect. There is a realization that what is needed is a new culture, a culture of peace, that involves changing attitudes, beliefs and behaviours from everyday life situations to high-level negotiations between countries, and that education for peace should be seen as an important element of the transition from the present culture of violence to a culture of peace. 2/

40. The specific role that women can play in this process results from the fact that, as a group, they are neither among the decision makers nor among the beneficiaries of the established power structure and the existing socio-economic, political and cultural establishment. For example, women constitute the majority of war refugees, although they had no say in the armed conflicts that uprooted them; they own hardly any property and are among the poorest of the poor, although they secure the daily survival of their families. As stated in the draft Platform for Action: "The power relations that impede women's attainment of fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public" (A/CONF.177/L.1, para. 183).

41. Because of their experience in coping with daily problems and the resolution of conflicts in the family, of being the educators of children and young people as mothers and as representatives of the teaching profession; and as grass-roots and community activists challenging environmental damage, militarization, the arms race and the trade in arms, corruption and violence, women can make a unique and largely untapped contribution to education for peace aimed at the creation of a culture of peace.

42. The expert group meeting on women's contribution to a culture of peace, organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women, which was held at Manila from 25 to 28 April 1995, addressed some of those issues and emphasized, from a woman's perspective, certain characteristics of the predominant culture of violence and of a culture of peace to be created. The meeting stressed the special role that women can play in the transformation from a culture of violence towards a culture of peace and considered gender inequality as one of the crucial obstacles to such a transformation. The meeting identified the following as the basic characteristics of a culture of peace: equality between women and men; respect for differences and recognition of diversities as creative and enriching to human potential; complete refusal of dominance, exploitation and discrimination in all human relations and social structures; responsibility for solidarity and assurance of well-being of

vulnerable persons by the world community; an end to the "insider-outsider" mentality and to people being treated as either exploitable or expendable; power derived from shared capacities and responsibilities; and respect for all human rights.

43. As the principles and guidelines for achieving a culture of peace, the meeting identified cultural diversity and social and structural change rooted in the local community and aimed at the gradual elimination of the existing causes of conflicts. It called for the achievement of comprehensive security, encompassing such dimensions as ecological, economic, political, cultural, social and individual security, and focused on prevention, peacemaking and peace-building rather than the use of force, and on respect for human rights and a complete end to discrimination. It advocated partnership contracts between the family and the global society based on equality, partnership and equal citizenship of men and women. It identified developments for economic and social justice, including examination of all policies from the perspective of their impact on the human rights of women, peace and the natural environment; and education, arts and communication for transformation, with special emphasis on gender equality, values and attitudes in education, literacy and basic education programmes in all the poorer sectors of society.

44. The creation of a culture of peace defined in that way would require a special, new type of education. Such education should be value-oriented and focus on human solidarity, mutuality, justice, equality of the sexes and respect for diversity and human rights. It should provide skills enabling society to renounce violence as a means of achieving individual or collective purposes and to prepare for participation in conflict management, peacemaking, peace-building, social dialogue and negotiations. It should also pursue the concept of a global community rather than separate competitive societies and should develop consciousness of the unity of humankind and the natural environment. This new type of education should also provide a sense of global citizenship, prepare for participation in the democratic transformation of societies, including the decision-making and peace process at the national and international levels. Women's holistic approach to peace, security and citizenship makes them particularly qualified to take the lead in this new type of education for peace.

45. On the basis of these conclusions, the report suggested an approach for dealing with the wider issue of bringing women into the peace process, including, in particular, through education for peace.

III. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 49/161 ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

A. Cooperation by the organizations of the United Nations system with the Commission on the Status of Women on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies

46. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/161, reaffirmed the central role of the Commission on the Status of Women in matters related to the advancement of women, and called upon it to continue to promote the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies to the year 2000, based on the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, and the sub-theme "Employment, health and education", and urged all relevant bodies of the United Nations system to cooperate effectively with the Commission in that task.

47. The nineteenth ad hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women was held in New York on 13 and 14 March 1995. The main work of the Meeting related to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women; the Meeting also discussed the form of inter-agency cooperation after the Conference. The Meeting reiterated its recommendation to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), made at its eighteenth meeting, to establish the ad hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women on a permanent basis as a coordination and cooperation mechanism for the implementation of the Platform for Action and for the programme on the advancement of women. The Meeting underlined the important role it played in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and in the preparatory process for the Fourth World Conference on Women. At the same time, the importance of integrating a gender approach into the work of all subsidiary bodies of ACC was emphasized.

48. In compliance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/16 of 27 July 1993, the Meeting held discussions on the preparations of the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001. It was recommended to hold an extraordinary Inter-Agency Meeting in conjunction with the discussion of the item on the advancement of women in the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, to consider a draft of the revised system-wide medium-term plan.

49. A joint statement of the Inter-Agency Meeting concerning the institutionalization of a gender-sensitive system-wide inter-agency structure was delivered to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-ninth session. It stressed that in order to accomplish the implementation of the declarations and programmes of action adopted at world conferences, such as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, in a manner that would ensure complementarity, synergy and a gender perspective, the Inter-Agency Meeting should be institutionalized, since to date there had been no such formal system-wide structure with competence on gender-related matters.

50. With regard to specific organizations of the United Nations system, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in its substantive programme activities, continued to develop innovative interventions oriented towards increasing rural women's access to and control of productive resources, especially through improved extension and training. Many FAO activities highlighted the crucial roles played by rural women in such areas as food security, household nutrition and family well-being, demographics, and ecologically sustainable development. In a number of countries, institutional capabilities to recognize the differential needs and constraints of rural women as opposed to men have been strengthened, and the ability of these institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, to deliver services that reflect these differential needs and constraints has been enhanced. By learning from these experiences, FAO will be better prepared to replicate successes in other countries and to develop even better interventions in the future.

B. System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001

51. By its resolution 1993/16, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001 as a general framework for the coordination of system-wide efforts. It requested the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, to arrange for a revision of the system-wide medium-term plan after the Platform for Action and the results of the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women have been adopted. In resolution 49/161, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in formulating the system-wide medium-term plan, to pay particular attention to specific sectoral themes that cut across the three objectives - equality, development and peace - and to include, in particular, literacy, education, health, population, the impact of technology on the environment and its effect on women and the full participation of women in decision-making, and to continue to assist Governments in strengthening their national machineries for the advancement of women.

52. At the nineteenth ad hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women, convened under the auspices of ACC, agreements were reached among the organizations of the United Nations system regarding revisions to the system-wide medium-term plan. The plan will be structured according to the critical areas of concern set out in the Platform for Action and will include those actions that are expected to be taken by the relevant organizations of the United Nations system during the plan period. The critical areas of concern include all the issues emphasized by the General Assembly in resolution 49/161.

53. A draft of the plan is in preparation and will be finalized in November 1995 and submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fortieth session. After taking into account the Commission's comments, a final draft will be considered by ACC and forwarded to the Economic and Social Council through the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

C. Women with disabilities, elderly women and also women in vulnerable situations such as migrant and refugee women and children

54. In paragraph 10 of resolution 49/161, the General Assembly strongly urged that particular attention be given by the competent United Nations organizations and Governments to the special needs of women with disabilities, elderly women and also women in vulnerable situations such as migrant and refugee women and children.

55. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its thirty-ninth session, in considering the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and especially the draft Platform for Action, emphasized that the situation of various groups of women, including refugees, migrant women, indigenous women and women with disabilities, be reflected.

56. Separate reports on violence against migrant women workers and on traffic in women and children are being submitted to the General Assembly.

57. In its resolution 39/2 on the release of women and children who have been taken hostage in armed conflicts and imprisoned, the Commission on the Status of Women urged all parties to conflicts to release all women and children who had been taken hostage in areas of armed conflict. The Commission also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the matter to the Commission at its fortieth session. 3/

58. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) noted that women in export processing or free trade zones are also vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. This seemed to be increasingly prevalent and a threat to the rights of these women workers. This issue is among the potential subjects meriting further study, especially in the context of structural adjustment and the new trade agreements.

D. Steps to be taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, to ensure that relevant human rights mechanisms of the United Nations regularly address violations of the rights of women

59. In resolution 49/161, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report for the Commission on the Status of Women, for consideration at its thirty-ninth session, on steps to be taken by the Division for the Advancement of Women, in cooperation with other United Nations bodies, specifically the Centre for Human Rights, to ensure that relevant human rights mechanisms of the United Nations, such as treaty-monitoring bodies, special rapporteurs and working groups, regularly address violations of the rights of women, including gender-specific abuses. The requested report was submitted to the Commission, including progress in preparing a joint work plan on women's human rights for the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

60. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 39/5 on mainstreaming the human rights of women, stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights to ensure that the United Nations human rights mechanisms address, on a regular basis, violations of the human rights of women and that the Commission on the Status of Women regularly takes stock of that integration process while carrying out its central role of monitoring activities relating to the status of women. The Commission recommended that the Division for the Advancement of Women provide input for the next meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, providing background analyses of the relevant articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in order to assist the treaty bodies in addressing violations of the human rights of women by, inter alia, amending their reporting guidelines, in the consideration of State reports and in the preparation of general comments. 4/ The Division has prepared an analysis of methods for incorporating gender factors in the work of the treaty bodies and has submitted it, through the Centre for Human Rights, to the sixth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies.

61. The Commission encouraged the Division for the Advancement of Women to provide relevant material it receives or prepares, through the Centre for Human Rights, for the information of the treaty bodies in their work and to cooperate with and assist the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, through the automatic and regular exchange of information and by forwarding expeditiously relevant material it receives or prepares on violence against women. It encouraged the efforts made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote and protect the human rights of women, including his efforts to coordinate the activities of relevant United Nations organs, bodies and mechanisms dealing with human rights in considering violations of the human rights of women.

62. The Commission requested the Secretary-General, taking into account the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to undertake the preparation of a joint work plan on the human rights of women for the Centre for Human Rights and the Division for the Advancement of Women on an annual basis and to inform both the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women at their annual sessions, beginning in 1995, of those plans to facilitate the mainstreaming of the human rights of women, in the context of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

63. Modalities for a clear division of labour and coordination of action between the Centre and the Division are being developed in the context of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and will be included in the report on the follow-up to the Conference, submitted separately to the General Assembly.

E. Public information

64. The Secretary-General was requested, in paragraph 19 of General Assembly resolution 49/161, to continue to provide for the existing weekly radio programmes on women in the regular budget of the United Nations, making adequate

provisions for broadcasts in different languages, and to develop the focal point for issues relating to women in the Department of Public Information. In cooperation with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department should provide more effective public information programmes relating to the advancement of women.

65. The Department of Public Information continues to produce the weekly radio programme "Women" in English and twice-monthly programmes in Arabic, French and Spanish. These programmes are distributed to about 400 radio stations world wide.

F. World Survey on the Role of Women in Development

66. The Secretary-General was requested, in paragraph 16 of resolution 49/161, to continue updating the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, with particular emphasis on the adverse impact of the economic situation on women. The first Survey was prepared for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held at Nairobi from 15 to 26 July 1985. The General Assembly, at its fortieth session, considered the Survey and, by resolution 40/204 of 17 December 1985, requested the Secretary-General to update the Survey on a regular basis, focusing on selected emerging development issues that had impact on the role of women in the economy at the local, national, regional and international levels. It was emphasized that the Survey was the joint effort of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system. The first update was submitted to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session, in 1989. That Survey explored women's participation in the global adjustment process and its impact on them.

67. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolutions 44/77 of 8 December 1989 and 44/171 of 19 December 1989, the second update of the Survey was issued in 1994. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its resolution 36/8, decided to include the Survey as one of the principle documents for the Fourth World Conference on Women. 5/ The 1994 Survey, like its predecessors, was a product of the United Nations system. It was based on micro-studies and specialized studies by organizations of the United Nations system. It utilized the third version of the Women's Indicators and Statistics Database (WISTAT), created by the Statistical Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis. The Survey examined three main issues, poverty, productive employment and economic decision-making, from a gender perspective. It has been issued as a United Nations publication under the title Women in a Changing Global Economy. 6/

68. By decision of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Survey is expected to appear on a quinquennial basis, in the year preceding the regular review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. Accordingly, the next update should be issued in 1999.

G. Development of methods of compilation and data collection

69. In paragraph 29 of resolution 49/161, the Assembly recommended the further development of methods of compilation and data collection in areas of concern identified by the Commission on the Status of Women and urged Member States to improve and broaden the collection of gender-disaggregated statistical information and make it available to the relevant bodies of the United Nations system.

70. The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics 7/ was published for the Fourth World Conference on Women. It was prepared by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and, within the United Nations Secretariat, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Department of Public Information. The publication covers the core areas addressed in the first edition of The World's Women, in 1991: population and families, health, child-bearing, work and public life. It also includes new topics such as the media, violence against women, poverty, the environment, refugees and displaced persons, and 50 years of women's participation in the United Nations and in peace-keeping.

71. The Statistical Division also assisted in the preparation of documentation and public information for the Conference by circulating research reports prepared for WISTAT. WISTAT provides a comprehensive set of internationally available gender-based statistics in a single, comprehensive and well-documented source. It was established with UNFPA support and is available on diskette and CD-ROM. A manual was prepared by the Statistical Division for national use on how to compile and organize statistics on gender-related issues and how to present tables and charts and write up the quantitative analysis. The manual was used in draft form at various forums at the end of the year. This work is supported by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP).

72. The Statistical Division, in collaboration with INSTRAW, conducted a training programme for users and producers of statistics in order to improve the use and quality of existing data on gender-related issues. Efforts have also been made to influence the revision of international standards and guidelines for collecting, classifying and analysing statistical information, with a view to integrating gender perspectives. For instance, INSTRAW and the Statistical Division actively participated in the latest revision of the System of National Accounts, the International Standard for Classification of Occupations and the International Classification of Status of Employment.

73. Research studies have also been conducted by INSTRAW on statistics and indicators on special groups. Results of such studies, containing recommendations on specific indicators that can be compiled from existing data and identifying the more crucial data gaps, have been published. Existing time-use data-collection techniques that can bridge existing gaps are being

modified for situations in developing countries. Objective approaches for measuring and recognizing women's contribution to economic development are similarly being developed, in line with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and outcomes of regional plans and platforms for action and in accordance with the current statistical accounting system.

74. The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) also carried out a number of gender-specific activities in the areas of statistics and demography. Work sessions on statistics on women are organized every three years as part of the work programme of the Conference of European Statisticians, and a new statistical publication, entitled Women and Men in Europe and North America, was issued for the Fourth World Conference on Women. In the area of demography, research projects have been undertaken on the socio-economic living conditions of elderly women, and on the relationship between child-bearing, union formation and dissolution, education and work. In addition, ECE has just completed a study on the use of time of women in Europe and North America.

75. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has established a database on women in industry. It became clear during that undertaking that large gaps existed in many countries in statistical data on women in industry and other data that were related to the role of women in manufacturing.

H. Participation of women in the planning and implementation of programmes for sustainable development

76. In paragraph 14 of resolution 49/161, the General Assembly urged organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to ensure the active participation of women in the planning and implementation of programmes for sustainable development.

77. Following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in 1992, the General Assembly established the Commission for Sustainable Development, whose role is to monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Conference agreements, including Agenda 21. The Commission, taking a thematic approach, reviews selected chapters of Agenda 21 each year; an overall review is scheduled for 1997.

78. Chapter 24 of Agenda 21, on global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development, concerns women's issues. The Commission for Sustainable Development, at its third session, in 1995, reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on the role and contribution of major groups (E/CN.17/1995/9), covering chapters 23 to 32 of Agenda 21, including chapter 24. In its 1995 report, the Commission stated the following:

> "The Commission notes the growing awareness of the linkages among development, environmental protection and the empowerment of women. In accordance with decisions taken at relevant United Nations conferences, it calls upon Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups to give particular attention to the need to involve women in decision-making at all levels of population and sustainable development-

related strategies, policies, projects and programmes. The Commission also calls for the further promotion of measures directed at empowerment of women, ensuring their full access to literacy, education and training, and health, and at the removal of all obstacles to their access to credit and other productive resources and to their ability to buy, hold and sell property and land equally with men. Such empowerment is an important factor in influencing demographic trends and sustainability." 8/

79. The Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in summarizing the high-level meeting of the Commission, made the following observation: "The crucial role of women as well as youth and indigenous people and other local communities in decision-making was reiterated by many delegations". 9/

80. The High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development held its third session in October 1994. One of the issues discussed by the Board was sustainable food security for a growing population. In paragraph 25 of its report (E/CN.17/1995/25), the Board noted that:

"Women play a critical role in rural development and agricultural activities. They produce 60 to 80 per cent of the basic food supply in sub-Saharan Africa; grow 70 per cent of the crops on the Indian subcontinent; perform over 50 per cent of the labour involved in intensive rice production in Asia as a whole; and manage complex agro-silvopastoral complexes in Central and South America. However, women are often in a disadvantageous situation with regard to social, economic, technological and legal conditions that frustrate or prevent them from being given the opportunity to fully participate in agricultural development. There is a need for legal, administrative and other measures to promote the access of women to land, agricultural credit, appropriate agricultural technologies, extension programmes, membership in agricultural cooperatives, training in use of fertilizers and pesticides, and training in conservation and land rehabilitation measures."

The Board advised that, in order to be effective, agricultural technology development must be based on a systems approach and must include a strong element of farmer participation with equal opportunities for men and women (para. 30).

81. A number of the reports of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Sustainable Development referred to the importance of women's equal participation in sustainable development.

82. In pursuit of its overall policy of support to women in development, the Department for Development Support and Management Services paid particular attention to assessing the actual and potential roles of women in all its various development activities. This entails designing specific strategies and mechanisms not only to include women as direct beneficiaries but also to promote their active participation in the various activities as they are carried out. The Department's efforts increasingly focus on support to women's productive activities as independent generators of income and their social empowerment as community leaders and decision makers.

83. The Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes of WFP, at its thirty-eighth session, in December 1994, adopted the WFP Mission Statement, which ensures that its assistance programmes are designed and implemented on the basis of broad-based participation. Women, in particular, are the key to change, and it is the aim of WFP to provide food to women as the providers and caretakers of the entire household, especially children. The WFP project approval process now requires that proposals relate explicitly to the action taken by Governments, non-governmental organizations and beneficiaries of WFP assistance in these areas.

84. An expert group meeting on women in industry, organized by UNIDO and held at Vienna from 10 to 12 July 1995, emphasized the necessity of developing and strengthening UNIDO's network, partnership and visibility in governmental and non-governmental circles, with a view to supporting its work on the integration of women in sustainable industrial development and of identifying regional problems and developing regionally specific strategies and recommendations for accelerating and monitoring gender-sensitive and sustainable industrial policies and programmes. UNIDO also provided assistance to Governments in the development of strategies for the integration of women in industrial development processes and policies (e.g., Burkina Faso, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe).

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 49/162 ON THE INTEGRATION OF OLDER WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

85. In its resolution 49/162, the General Assembly requested the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to pay particular attention to discrimination on grounds of age when evaluating national reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The request was conveyed to the Committee at its fourteenth session.

86. In the same resolution, the Assembly invited the competent organs of the United Nations to adopt an approach that, in all their strategies and programmes for the advancement of women, took into account all stages of life. In the course of inter-agency discussions, it has become apparent that a life-cycle approach in dealing with the advancement of women has become normal in the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system.

87. The Assembly invited the international development agencies and organizations, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women and UNDP, to take account of the potential of elderly women as a human resource for development and to include older women in their development strategies and programmes. Among the organizations concerned, the United Nations Development Fund for Women provides direct technical and financial support to women's initiatives in developing countries. It also seeks to bring women into mainstream development planning and decision-making. The Fund has projects that target older women specifically, and address their needs and interests.

88. The Assembly invited the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development to ensure that older women's concerns and contributions to development were considered at the Summit. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social

Development 10/ and Programme of Action of the Summit called for ensuring full and equal access to social services, especially education, legal services and health-care services for women of all ages and children, recognizing the rights, duties and responsibilities of parents and other persons legally responsible for children, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. 11/ It also called for ensuring that social protection and social support programmes meet the needs of women, and especially that they take into account women's multiple roles and concerns, in particular the reintegration of women into formal work after periods of absence, support for older women, and the promotion of acceptance of women's multiple roles and responsibilities. 12/

89. Finally, the Assembly urged the Commission on the Status of Women, as the preparatory body for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to ensure that older women's concerns and contributions to development were recognized and incorporated into the strategies, programmes and policies of the Platform for Action. The draft Platform for Action adopted by the Commission and transmitted to the Conference (A/CONF.177/L.1) contains references to older women in 5 paragraphs, to elderly women in 2, to women of all ages in 16 and to the life-cycle approach in 9.

Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ First Consultative Meeting of the Culture of Peace Programme Final Report (UNESCO, 1994).

3/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 6 (E/1995/26), chap. I, sect. C.

4/ Ibid.

5/ Ibid., 1992, Supplement No. 4 (E/1992/24), chap. I, sect. C.

6/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.IV.1.

7/ United Nations publication, Sales No. 95.XVII.2.

8/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 12 (E/1995/32), chap. I, sect. A, para. 92.

9/ Ibid., chap. II, para. 18.

10/ Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (A/CONF.166/9), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

11/ Ibid., annex II, para. 35 (c).

12/ Ibid., para. 38 (j).